

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

COVID 19 Response: Operations

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To outline the response to the COVID-19 outbreak across Operations.
- 1.2 The response to date is set in the context of the business continuity governance arrangements described in the COVID-19 Response report on this agenda

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 The Council's approach to its business continuity response to the COVID-19 outbreak and actions taken to implement government guidelines have been rooted in the values, principles and ambitions of the council plan, and furthered through the strong partnerships within North Lincolnshire, framed under the following priorities:

- keeping staff safe and well
- protecting the vulnerable
- enabling communities to remain resilient
- protecting the local economy

2.2 Many council functions have been sustained throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Nevertheless, from 20 March it was necessary to suspend or restrict some community facilities to the public. Large parts of the workforce subsequently stepped forward for new roles in support of the council's priorities, demonstrating incredible willingness and the ability to work agilely from home and for a large number of roles within Operation have continued to work in the community.

2.3 Key headlines in Operations functions response to Covid-19 include:

Keeping Staff Safe and Well

2.3.1 In line with the lockdown procedure office based locations within the NLC operational portfolio were vacated. Church Square House was

retained due to certain necessary functions located there but even then its mean average daily occupancy in April was just 15 people.

- 2.3.2 Operational buildings linked to service delivery such as Billet lane (in itself re-modelled and now multi-functional) remained opened but adhered to strict government guidance on social distancing and infection control.

Protecting the Economy

- 2.3.3 Highways have maintained a constant stream of activity throughout the crisis but with reduced crew numbers and traffic flow chose to re-prioritise accordingly.
- 2.3.4 Government guidance regarding which businesses could open and also how they should social distance resulted in the inspection and enforcement of the guidelines becoming the responsibility of Local Authorities. NLC officers have been called to several premises to “inspect” their operations but the model adopted as we move through lockdown is one of informing businesses as to their obligations through the guidelines, working with their trade representatives and only as a last resort relying on inspection thus enabling them to help themselves.
- 2.3.5 Civil enforcement on car parking has currently been suspended and will be re-introduced in line with government relaxation of the lockdown.

Enabling Communities to Flourish

- 2.3.6 The Coronavirus crisis reduced public transport patronage by 90% and without government assistance the service would have ceased. As a result transport have worked closely with the bus operators and colleges to remodel their offer and market relationship. This has resulted in a better understanding and a new market position which covers concessionary fares, subsidised routes, post 16 transport and development of the newly procured DRT service to be rolled out in September.
- 2.3.7 The crematorium has been managed well throughout this crisis. We have monitored closely the trajectory of need and followed government guidance throughout regarding the grounds opening. The adherence to social distancing with those attending funerals has proven tricky at times but the vast majority of residents have respected it.
- 2.3.8 Throughout the Coronavirus crisis NLC has maintained the opening of its parks. This we deemed was essential to allow access for our residents for their daily exercise. All playgrounds were closed, in line with government guidance, and will be re-opened in line with government guidance and the ability to meet social distancing.

2.3.9 The core council legal duty of the collection of residual household waste has not faltered throughout the coronavirus issue. To ensure this, we took the operational decision early on to cease temporarily the non-statutory collection of bulky items and green waste. This decision has proven successful with continued service on household residual waste and the continuing opening of the Household Recycling Centres, where some of our neighbouring authorities had ceased this service. Green waste services were re-introduced on 2nd June as the first wave peak of Coronavirus passed and we could rely on crews' availability. During this time period we introduced two new aspects to the green waste service, firstly the ability for households to swap their bin for a composter supplied free from NLC and secondly the introduction of a small fee to have an enlarged green waste bin collection service. The take up of both of these services has so far been encouraging.

Protecting the most Vulnerable

2.3.10 The Coronavirus crisis resulted in the government asking local authorities to house all homeless people throughout its duration. This triggered excellent cross departmental and external organisational activity with all homeless within North Lincolnshire being housed. This style of working has been noted and through this we have initiated the Housing Partnership with partner organisations to address the housing needs of the most vulnerable within North Lincolnshire.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Cabinet are asked to consider the report and note the response made to date to the COVID-19 emergency and acknowledge that business continuity and emergency planning remain in place.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 Business continuity across Operations continues to be maintained.

4.2 The positive working practices that have been successfully embedded throughout this period will be considered and built on as part of planning for gradual emergence to a new normal.

5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)

5.1 Any changes to staffing have the appropriate delegated decisions in place.

6. OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)

6.1 Not applicable.

7. **OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

7.1 Not applicable.

8. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

8.1 Staff have been consulted on any changes implemented throughout the business continuity phase and we will continue to engage with staff through the relevant well-developed mechanisms e.g. workforce engagement partnership, workforce surveys.

8.2 Regular meetings are being held with the recognised Trade Unions throughout this period to keep them up to date and consult with them as appropriate.

9. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 That Cabinet notes the response to COVID-19 as outlined in the report.

DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - COMMERCIAL

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report – NONE